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Our Common Faith

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GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY. By the REV. J. E. ROBERTS, M.A., D.D., *Minister of Union Chapel, Manchester*

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JESUS CHRIST, HIS ONLY SON OUR LORD. By PROF. ARTHUR S. PEAKE, D.D.

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THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS. By the REV. JAMES ADAMSON, M.A., B.SC., *St. Aidan's Presbyterian Church of England, Didsbury*

WITH A PREFACE BY THE
REV. PETER GREEN, M.A.
Canon of Manchester, Chaplain to H.M. The King

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Our Common Faith

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*Addresses by FIVE NONCON-
FORMISTS, delivered by invitation
of The Rector in ST. ANN'S
CHURCH, MANCHESTER
during December 1921*  

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The Invitation

*Preliminary Circular Letter issued by
Canon Dorrity*

*To all men of good-will of all Christian
Denominations*

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

With my Bishop's full knowledge and approval, I have invited five Non-conformist brethren to preach in St. Ann's on the Friday afternoons of December at 1-20 p.m., and take this opportunity of writing a little about it.

It should be clearly understood that the invitation was given and accepted "without prejudice" on either side: that is to say, it does not mean that any one of these five preachers, by accepting the invitation, abjures or declares to be false any of the traditional beliefs which are supposed to differentiate his denomination

from the Church of England ; or that in offering it I suppose, on my part, that there are "no differences," or no *important* differences, between us and them.

The thoughts underlying my invitation were, and are, that the greatest thing in the world is Love—Charity, Kindness, Brotherhood—and that it is our duty—the duty of *all* of us—to think and talk more about the things in which we agree than about the things in which we differ : and if we have this Light within us to let it shine so that it may be seen by "them that are without," and may cause even them to glorify our Common Father.

"See how these Christians love one another" may then be an inspiration rather than a gibe !

Theologically and ecclesiastically we are all more or less the creatures of our heredity and environment, and though this fact does not make void the duty and the necessity to seek truth and to pursue it, yet the recollection of it ought to make

us all a little more kindly in our judgments of each other.

There is much talk in these days of Unity and Reunion : they are difficult problems, and will be slow of accomplishment, while reunion by absorption is probably more difficult and distant still ; but it can never be wrong or unwise to strive to " come together " so far as we can, and this little effort is a humble step in that direction.

I hope that all well-disposed folk will give it support by their presence so FAR AS THEY CAN, and trust that it will stimulate and nourish our vague hopes and desires for Christian Unity and Brotherhood. Believe me,

Sincerely yours,

DAVID DORRITY,

Rector of St. Ann's.

P.S.—All the foregoing letter, with the necessary difference of date and time, was printed and ready for circulation so far back

as February 1920, and all the brethren named overleaf, together with Mr. Collier, had accepted my invitation to preach in St. Ann's on the Friday afternoons of the following Lent. The scheme was postponed owing to the appeal of the Archbishop of York that such efforts should await the discussion in July by the Lambeth Conference.

The Addresses are now to be delivered with Dr. Temple's cordial approval and episcopal sanction.

D. D.

November 1921.

N.B.—The offertories at these five services, after paying expenses, will be given to the Royal Infirmary.

Preface

BY THE REV. PETER GREEN, M.A., *Canon of Manchester,*
Chaplain to H.M. THE KING

THERE was something of real significance in the series of sermons in St. Ann's Church, Manchester, which are printed in this volume. There have of course been other examples of Nonconformist ministers being invited to preach in Anglican pulpits. Yet it was a very special occasion when five representatives of different denominations were asked to preach on some of the fundamentals of our common faith in a church which has been, for nearly a quarter of a century, the home of mid-day sermons in Manchester. Nor was an added reason for interest lacking. Canon Dorrity, without being in any sense of the word a party man, is nevertheless known to be himself in sympathy with the High Church position, and his invitation to his

Free Church brethren was therefore the fruit of no lack of interest in, or attachment to, church order and church doctrine. It is true of course that no party in the Church has shown itself more deeply interested in questions of reunion than the High Church party, and that if we except a small section of the more extreme Catholic party, it is more easy to find a spirit of friendly sympathy among them than among the old-fashioned Low Churchmen of the Church and State type. But all the same it is well that the experiment was made by one who could not be charged with any haziness on matters of doctrine or any laxness in matters of church order.

That Canon Dorrity's action in issuing the invitation did not go without criticism is natural. Yet surely most people would agree that it is time something was actually done, some steps actually taken, towards drawing Christians of various denominations together. Our unhappy divisions are not merely a practical handicap in

efforts for the evangelisation of the world at home and abroad. They are more than that. They are a cause of scandal to those that are without and afford the Philistine ready opportunity to blaspheme. In the face of growing irreligion and indifference in the world it is necessary that Christians should get together. Unity of command is not less necessary in the field of Christian effort than it was in France in the darkest days of the war. What the terms of unity shall be is a matter on which there is bound to be a great deal of discussion and wide differences of opinion. At the risk of offending some of the readers of this volume I will not hesitate to say that personally I am sure there is but one way to reunion and that is for the episcopal communions, while holding fast to what they believe to be divinely appointed means of grace and forms of church organisation, frankly to recognise that "God fulfils Himself in many ways," and to accept the witness of the life and

work of non-episcopal churches as proof that they too are in accord with God's will. In loyalty to the fathers that begat them, in loyalty to the past history of their communions and to their own souls' convictions, nay, in loyalty to the Holy Spirit Himself, members of the Free Churches dare not accept any terms of reunion which would seem to unchurch themselves and their forefathers. Only when we frankly admit them, their orders, and their sacraments, as of divine origin can we hope to see anything like real unity of spirit between the various non-episcopal denominations and the Anglican communion. And (still speaking only for myself) I am sure that such recognition involves at least free interchange of pulpits under proper regulation, and the admission to communion at Anglican altars of all who are duly recognised members of their own denomination. Such action on the part of our religious leaders would do more than anything else to lead Free

Churchmen to value in us, and to desire for themselves, those things which we have and we are tempted to feel that they lack.

But I frankly recognise that the time is not yet ripe for this. And why is it not ripe? I fear there can be but one answer, and that is that there is, as yet, but little effective desire among the bulk of Anglicans and Free Church folk, for reunion. A few ministers and clergy, a few of the finer spirits among the laity on both sides, do really feel our present state of chaos as a burden on their consciences and are really made unhappy by what we so glibly call our "unhappy" divisions. The rest are either utterly indifferent or actively hostile and suspicious. And such indifference and suspicion and hostility can only be charmed away by a better knowledge of what each side really is and really stands for. I have heard Nonconformist laymen, aye, and even ministers, express surprise when told that Anglicans believe in

conversion and in the need for a new birth. I know many Anglicans who feel less sympathy for "dissenters" than for people who openly profess disbelief in revealed religion of all kinds. I do not mean that any Anglican would say, in so many words, "Better be an infidel than a dissenter." But I fear there are many who would regard the fact that a favourite daughter was anxious to marry a well-known dissenter with a feeling which would not be aroused if the man she wished to marry were merely known as one who was quite indifferent to all religion.

How can this misunderstanding and lack of sympathy be removed? There is only one way, and that is by more mutual intercourse. Among young people an immense work has already been done by the Student Christian Movement and especially by the intercourse between members of different Churches at the conferences at Swanwick. But it is the ordinary church member who needs conversion.

And such efforts as that initiated by Canon Dorrity must be fruitful in such sympathy and understanding as are needed if reunion is ever to be attained and its blessings reaped to the advantage of the Church of Christ and a godless world.



Contents

	PAGE
CANON DORRITY'S INVITATION . . .	5
CANON GREEN'S PREFACE . . .	9
 I BELIEVE IN :	
I. GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY .	19
By the REV. J. E. ROBERTS, M.A., D.D., Minister of Union Chapel, Manchester	
II. JESUS CHRIST, HIS ONLY SON OUR LORD	45
By PROFESSOR ARTHUR S. PEAKE	
III. THE HOLY GHOST	61
By the REV. GEORGE JACKSON, B.A., D.D., Professor of Eng- lish and the English Bible, Didsbury College, Manchester	
IV. THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH .	89
By the REV. GEO. SHILLITO, Minis- ter of Hope Congregational Church, Oldham	
V. THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS .	103
By the REV. JAMES ADAMSON, M.A., B.Sc., St. Aidan's Presbyterian Church of England, Didsbury	

	PAGE
VI. THE LIFE EVERLASTING . . .	114
By the REV. CANON DORRITY, B.D.	
APPRECIATION OF THE SERVICES	
By the REV. G. SHILLITO . . .	126
By the REV. CANON DORRITY . . .	131

I believe in God the Father

I

BY REV. J. E. ROBERTS, M.A., D.D., *Minister of
Union Chapel, Manchester*

“I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.”

As I have the privilege of being the first of the five Free Churchmen whom Canon Dorrity has invited to give addresses in this famous church, I wish to express at once our gratitude for the courtesy and courage which have made possible this public manifestation of our unity as Christians. Many of us are convinced that such invitations make a real contribution towards healing the broken body of Christ. If they do nothing else, they do at least offer us the chance to emphasise our common faith ; and it has been decided to utilise this opportunity for such a purpose. We have agreed to speak on five of the articles of what is known as

the Apostles' Creed. This does not imply any definite acceptance by us of that creed as necessarily the creed of a reunited Church. The Lambeth Appeal asks for "the acceptance of the creed commonly called Nicene as the sufficient statement of the Christian Faith, and either it or the Apostles' Creed as the baptismal confession of belief." The whole question of the position of a creed in any reunited Church must receive careful consideration. Meanwhile, the Apostles' Creed is very widely accepted as a symbol of our common Faith. I recall a memorable moment in the first World Baptist Assembly in London, when the late Dr. McLaren, who presided, called upon the audience, representing almost every country in the world, to repeat the Apostle's Creed as an indication of our unity in the Christian Faith with all our fellow-Christians. It is this sense of the general acceptance of the Creed which has decided us to make some of its Articles the subjects of our addresses.

Therefore, I am not here to-day to present an argument, but to declare a belief. My subject does not invite an argument. The existence of God is one of those axioms which are assumed rather than proved. Jesus never tried to prove God's existence. He did offer powerful arguments about God. He did not argue for God. He took the existence of God for granted, as common ground between Himself and His hearers. Then He tried to explore this ground with them, that they might understand its nature as He understood it. So we accept the existence of God as axiomatic in religion; but we believe that the nature of our religion depends upon our conception of God. The knowledge of Euclid's axioms does not decide the contents of the books of Euclid; nor does a belief in the existence of God decide religious faith. That depends upon what kind of God we believe in.

It is important, therefore, to recognise the fundamental nature of our thought of

God. We are going to advance into a wide country ; it will be fatal if we lose touch with our base. We shall move in company with Jesus, depending upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit, seeking the fellowship of the Church, declaring the forgiveness of sins. But we must keep open our communication with God. God's nature is the only adequate basis for the Christian religion. We do not substitute the ethical teaching of Jesus for God's moral law or the sacrifice of Jesus for the love of God. All Christian ethics and Christian doctrines find their authority in the nature of the Christian God. They gain their quality from Him. Take, e.g., the Atonement. There have been times when the Atonement has been described as if God were unwilling to save men until Jesus persuaded Him to do so by placating Him with a sacrifice. We have to recognise the inherent falsity of any such teaching, and insist that the Atonement can only be explained in terms of the

eternal love of God. Our conception of God may not prove a sufficient basis for an organic unity. I do not think it is. But unless all our beliefs can be traced back to one conception of God, held by all Christians alike, our differences will be too deep to make organic unity possible. Jesus Christ manifests God ; He does not supersede Him. Therefore our Christian creed must be based upon a conception of God which is adequate to the Christian message. What is attempted to-day may seem much more remote from a practical contribution to unity than the discussions on later subjects. But unless we are building upon a foundation well and truly laid, our later efforts might end in disaster. That is why it is necessary for us to think to-day about the foundation of our Creed—its statement about God.

And that is why the first Article of that Creed, which is so widely accepted as a summary of our common faith as Christians, lays the foundation in its definition

of God. But that definition is only the foundation; the superstructure is constructed in the later sentences. It is not possible to claim that this foundation is so distinctively Christian that only a Christian could accept it. "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth": others than Christians could say that. Certainly Unitarians could say it. Probably many Jews and Moham-medans could say it. Everything depends upon two things: (1) the interpretation put upon the characteristic words of this sentence; and (2) the evidence upon which we rely for its truth. The statement itself is Theistic rather than exclusively Christian.

This fact emphasises at the outset the vital connection of Christianity with the fundamental religious conceptions of the race. When we call ourselves Christians we are not claiming to be the sole possessors of all the religious truth in the world. There is truth in all religions be-

cause God has never left Himself without a witness ; in many religions professed by earnest and progressive peoples there is very much that is true. Christianity complements rather than challenges the other faiths of mankind. It rewards rather than rebukes the longings which have sobbed out the imperfect religious aspirations of many ages. Our longing for Christian unity is not a protest against other people's ignorance. It is a passion for truth as we see it.

Another fact emphasised is that Christianity is in vital touch not only with other religions but also with other modes of thought than the religious. The language of this Article contains terms with large philosophical and scientific implications. The word "Almighty" raises at once questions as to Divine Omnipotence and human free will, which have been the subject of prolonged discussion, and which are still open to fresh interpretations. "The Father Almighty" is not a dogma

which silences the philosopher : it interests him. In the same way, "maker of heaven and earth" is a phrase pregnant with scientific meaning. There is no final statement here as to how God created heaven and earth. There is nothing about making the world in six days ; nor is the word "evolution" either demanded or denied. The Christian Faith is not linked to any particular philosophical school, or to any special scientific theory. It deals with the religious significance of what has also philosophical and scientific significance. Therefore it recognises the proper sphere of philosophy and science, neither claiming to dictate to them nor allowing them to neglect the religious aspect of the facts they study. The Christian of the fifth century, of the tenth century, of the fifteenth century, of the twentieth century, can repeat, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth." But the twentieth-century Christian will certainly read a different mean-

ing into the terms used, because they are symbols of a knowledge which grows from more to more. Christian unity does not imply any rigid interpretation of terms which confessedly change their meaning with changing times.

Nevertheless, this foundation of our Faith is quite decidedly laid for a Christian sanctuary; and although other religions may erect their temples upon it, its structure is the outline of a Christian Church. Both by what it excludes and by what it suggests, this statement about God unites those who see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The statement "I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth" rules out at once certain interpretations of deity which are antagonistic to Christianity.

1. It rules out agnosticism as a sufficient creed. There is an agnostic attitude which is nearer akin to Christian reverence than the glib, facile speech of people posing as the keepers of the divine con-

science and the counsellors of the Almighty. But an agnosticism which declares God to be unknowable is plainly a flat denial of the Christian position. Let us linger over this point for a moment. The Christian Church does not deny the right of the human mind to discuss the problem of God's existence. Indeed, it manifests, of necessity, keen interest in such discussion. One of the great books of theological interest of recent years is Professor Gwatkin's *Knowledge of God*. In last month's *Expositor*, Professor Macintosh, of Edinburgh, writes under the title "Is God Knowable?" Nor does the Church demand submission to authority, to the detriment of reason. It declares plainly that the existence of God cannot be logically demonstrated. There are many proofs, but there is no demonstration; and those who insist on having one must be plainly told that we have none to give. But this is because God is one of those final postulates of thought, others being

the world and self, which, though incapable of demonstration, have conclusive value for the vast majority of thinking people.

Moreover, Christianity asserts the sufficiency of the revelation given by God in nature, in the moral facts of life, in history, and particularly, in the history of Jesus, to supply us with a positive knowledge of Himself, a knowledge adequate to the Christian Faith. It charges agnosticism with at least two capital mistakes. (a) One is a logical blunder. Agnosticism uses arguments about God which imply His existence, but deny the possibility of our knowing anything about Him. This is bad logic. For if He is the final cause of all causes, He must have power to be a sufficient cause. If He is the ultimate origin of life and personality, He must have life and personality Himself. If He has given us a moral sense, He must Himself be its embodiment. It is an indefensible position that partial knowledge is no

knowledge at all. We must trust partial knowledge so far as it goes. Therefore, whilst readily allowing the value of an agnosticism which refuses to go beyond the lengths to which history and experience carry us, we charge agnosticism with bad logic when it declares God to be unknowable because we cannot know the entire meaning of deity. "God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth" may not be a full description of God. But it is an attempt to describe real knowledge of God for which we have abundant evidence. (b) Agnosticism is guilty also of a practical blunder, because it encourages a widespread tendency in human nature to evade conditions which are laborious and unpalatable. The fact that we cannot find out the Almighty to perfection is no excuse for not trying to find out anything at all. But it may easily become such an excuse in the lives of people who shirk moral effort, or are seeking something to blunt the point of

conscience. No one would charge the agnosticism of Herbert Spencer with this weakness. But it is notorious that agnosticism becomes a convenient shelter for many who are too lazy to think, too flippant to be good, too despondent to march breast forward.

Therefore, our Christian Creed challenges both the intellectual agnosticism, with its bad logic, and the moral agnosticism, with its bad conduct; over against the assertion that God is unknowable, and that, therefore, men either cannot or need not try to know Him, we place the clear, definite, testing statement, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth." And if someone asserts "No man hath seen God at any time," we reply, "The only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."

2. It rules out those pessimistic deities with which the German philosophy of last century tried to frighten the terrified

reader into some kind of intellectual torpor or moral suicide. Guided by the travesty of deity which Spinoza offered to the world, Schopenhauer substituted "Will" for God, and pictured a blind Titanic force producing a world which is a welter of woe. Hartmann endowed this Almighty Will with a certain sort of intellect; but God remains unconscious, driving on through the wild waters of life like a mighty ship whose captain stands on the bridge, dead. These frenzied divinities of modern pessimism, which have been described as an "eye-socket with an eye fixing on us the demoniac gaze of raving madness," have influenced the thought of Europe more than some people imagine. But after they have driven the ship of humanity upon the rocks of the awful war, people are less inclined to trust the future to them. Our Christian Creed will have nothing to do with any such pessimistic mutterings. We confront a sore and sorrowful world with this affirmation

“We believe in God the Father Almighty.”

There have been later developments of this philosophical speculation about God which have held more moral content, but have led its votaries quite as far from the Christian hope. Some of the followers of Hegel have excluded rigorously all figurative elements from our thought of God. Thus we must not call God “Father.” “Father” is a human term, and must be discarded. It is not right to say of God that He wills, or knows, or feels: these are characteristics of human life. This kind of blind leading plunges us at last into a blank fog. God has no recognisable features at all, and might as well not exist. Emphatically this is not the Christian God. The terms we use do need to be handled reverently. But they mean something we can understand. They are broken lights; but their shining is true light. We believe that the life of God is the light of men. The darkness cannot

master it; the light shines on, and men do walk in the light.

3. It rules out all pantheistic interpretations of deity. These have been a favourite refuge for confused thinkers in the past, and they are rife to-day amongst people too disturbed by the tragic happenings of the last years to keep silence before the Lord. But they are incompatible with the Christian Faith. As we Christians separate ourselves from all agnostics, and from all philosophical pessimists, so we separate ourselves from all who are content to be pantheists. Our God is a personal God, for ever distinct from us. He is Father, and we are His children. He is almighty, and we are frail and faulty. He is maker of heaven and earth, and we are His creatures. The foundation of our Creed is not a vast reservoir, along the walls of which we wretched mortals crouch and climb until we can fall into the seductive waters and be reabsorbed in the infinite; it is a solid

structure built to hold up a temple for the worship of one eternal God, whom we, His children and His creatures, worship and love.

Therefore our common faith about God has already brought us Christians a long way together. We are born into a world in which the fog of doubt and the miasma of pessimism haunt the valleys, whilst the clouds of mysticism creep low down the hillsides. People who cling to these lower levels of speculative thought cannot escape from the damp and the darkness. Christianity calls us to climb into the clearer light of revelation. And all who profess and call themselves Christians have reached that blessed height where the sunlight of God's face shines upon us. We have not all reached the same height ; some Christians are farther up the mountain than others. But we do

“ Stand upon the mount of God,
With sunlight in our soul.”

The Christian temple is not erected in

the valleys of ignorance of God or denial of God. As Jerusalem was built upon the highlands of Palestine, so are the foundations of the New Jerusalem laid on the table-lands of faith in a personal God who is Father Almighty, with whom His creatures may walk in holy, happy fellowship. So much, at least, is declared by this first Article of our Creed.

Perhaps it will be objected that there is nothing in this statement about the Trinity. That is true, and there is reason for it. The Christian doctrine of the Trinity is not a dogmatic speculation. It is an experience. It is an attempt to declare the wonder and glory of God as He has manifested Himself to men in their experience. Trinitarian teaching does not belong to the first statement about God, any more than an account of the spectrum need be given in the first chapter of a book on light. It is when we have looked into the face of Jesus Christ and seen His surpassing glory, "the

glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father," that we begin to seek for some means of expressing the wealth of the divine nature which can go beyond a bare statement of His oneness. It is when we have heard the sound as of a rushing, mighty wind, and have felt the stirring of an illimitable energy, that we advance to a declaration of the threefold nature of our wonderful God. Enough for us that before we build up such a magnificent edifice, we affirm this fundamental faith: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth."

But if we examine our foundation more carefully, we discover that something more positive is implied. Evidently these foundations were laid for a certain kind of superstructure. One word is very prominent in the statement: it is the word "Father." Now "Father" is a symbolic word. It requires interpretation. It can only be used if some other words are going to be used, which will throw light on its

meaning. In what sense can we call God "Father"? Whose Father is He? What kind of Father is He? It is evident that we cannot ascribe to God everything that is found in any human father, or even in all human fathers. If He is God the Father Almighty, He is not a human father. And that makes all the difference. For "father" is a human term, with many human associations. When we call God "Father," we seem to associate Him with human qualities; yet when we add the term "Almighty," we affirm at once a fatherhood which is superhuman. Therefore we create an expectation of some other statements to follow this one. It is not sufficient of itself. It is not a complete statement of our common faith. It does make some very definite and extremely important affirmations about God. But these leave us asking where is that Word of God which shall tell us authoritatively what kind of Father God is, and who are His children?

It is a source of inexpressible gladness to us Christians that we can confront the world to-day with this magnificent affirmation about God. He is "the Father Almighty." Is He? Then Paul's beautiful word is true; faith, hope, love abide, and the greatest of these is love. With the sacred name "Father" woven into the very fabric of our faith, we can offer to bind up the wounds of the world, to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives. With that sacred name "Father" impressed upon the very foundations of our religion, we can set to work to build a sanctuary which shall be a home for all nations. With that sacred name "Father" ringing in our ears, we challenge both the conditions of life which deny brotherhood, and the clamant voices which call for class warfare. So noble is this idea of God that, if it is true, it is the charter of humanity's freedom and happiness, the guarantee of progress, the bell of hope ringing out its

sweet appeal amid the clash of human hatreds.

Yes, if it is true ! But is it ? So many facts seem against it. How do we dare to assert it ? Because we are Christians. We find the unassailable proof of its truth in Jesus Christ. It is to Jesus we owe this use of the name Father. Though other faiths might have a place for the name, the position given to it in Christianity is due to the influence of Jesus. It was He who laboured to write that name deep in the hearts of men. The emphasis put upon the name in the creed is due to Him. And the supreme proof of the Fatherhood of God is Himself.

Therefore we Christians do not think it sufficient to affirm the Fatherhood of God apart from the interpretation given to that name by what has been called "the fact of Christ." The presence of Jesus in the world throws a splendid light upon that Fatherhood, and the light is made more brilliant by all He did and

said and suffered. People who dim that light are destroying more than they realise. I have watched the snowy Alps glowing in the rosy light of sunset until the scene was one of overpowering beauty. But gradually the glow faded as the sun sank in the west; and presently there was nothing to be seen but a vast blackness dimly discernible against the deep violet of the night. The fact of God's Fatherhood is like a great mountain. It takes on a lovely meaning when the light of the Son's presence illumines it. But if Jesus is lost to us, sinking beyond time's horizon as one of the luminaries of the world, we shall be left in a night in which God's Fatherhood will be nothing more than a stupendous something from which men will presently retire to rest. It is not only the Son of God we shall be losing. The Fatherhood of God will fade out of view also, as the illumining light is withdrawn.

This is a matter of grave importance. The one hope for the vitality of the

brotherhood of men is the Fatherhood of God. If the Fatherhood were to disappear as a practical and powerful incentive, our world would become immeasurably poorer. The torch of hope would be quenched, and the runners fall by the roadside. Amidst all the clamour and chaos of these distressful days, one word keeps sounding a note of hope : it is that word "brotherhood." Brotherhood, forsooth ! And pray where can we discover brotherhood ? What hope is there that the jealous nations, suspicious of each other's motives, straining for commercial supremacy, can accept a doctrine so aloof from the actualities of to-day ? Frankly, I know of one hope only. And it is this : that at the head of our vale of tears He stands, the Man of the sacred wounds, and that the shining cross carried by this divine Man, like some stupendous sign picked out in electric light above the city streets, declares God to be our Father. Brotherhood is the upper note of a chord which has Father-

hood as its lower note. Silence the lower note, and you destroy the harmony. Destroy the harmony, and the world will soon tire of a single note.

And that is why we are drawing together for Christian worship, for Christian work, for Christian witness. Our common conception of God is too precious to be endangered by our denominational differences in a world which is losing faith in God's Fatherhood, whilst it struggles towards brotherhood. If by any means we can re-establish that saving faith, it must be done. And we are the people to do it, because we have Jesus Christ, whose presence proves the Fatherhood which His teaching declared.

And here I must leave the task of stating our common faith to my successors in this pleasant comradeship. We have examined our foundations. We have found them to be built securely on faith in a personal deity, and to be designed for a Christian superstructure. It would

be possible for people to-day who do not worship in the Christian temple to linger amid the foundations. But they would never have laid these foundations ; nor are foundations intended to be anyone's home. The aim of the builders is to guide us all into the Christian sanctuary which rests upon these foundations. It is the increasing purpose of Christians to unite in one common worship there ; and with one voice to plead with all their fellow-creatures to join in this homage paid in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to the one " God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth."

BY PROFESSOR ARTHUR S. PEAKE

I MAY introduce the consideration of our subject by a reference to the structure of the Apostles' Creed. When we examine it we are struck by what seems at first sight a dislocation of its scheme. For we might have expected that it would read, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord, and in the Holy Ghost." Instead of that, when we have had a definition of the term "Jesus Christ," we pass on to a whole series of historical events, all of them experiences through which Jesus has passed or is to pass. Moreover, when we look more closely at these Articles of the Creed which follow, we are struck with this feature in them that, although they are largely facts in history and experience, they are neverthe-

less facts which can be at once translated into terms of theology. In other words, when we say we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, we go on to enumerate a number of facts; but these facts at once suggest to us a series of theological affirmations. We believe, it might have been said, in the Incarnation, in the Atonement through suffering, in the Resurrection, in the Ascension, His Session at God's right hand, and His second coming to judge the world.

Now both these phenomena, the apparent dislocation of structure on the one side, and the fact that the historical statements are all invested with a theological significance, put before us very clearly the differentia of Christianity, that which distinguishes it from other religions. For, as it has often been pointed out, in other religions the founder is one who laid down the fundamental principles of doctrine and gave his followers the rules by which they might guide their lives aright. But when we come to the Christian faith, we

not only accept the teaching which Jesus has given to us as the Revealer of God, but we go beyond that and we place Him, the Person of the Founder, in the very centre of the religion itself. This it is, then, which distinguishes the Christian religion, the central place that it gives to its Founder. And a further characteristic is that it does not limit itself to the making of theological affirmations about its Founder, but it regards certain events in His life, certain facts in history, as crucial and vital to the very religion itself. That, then, is what springs to our mind on the first view of this Article of our Creed and the Articles which are associated with it, the place central, vital, and eternal which is given to the Founder of the religion and the experience through which He passed.

When we look at the terms in which He is defined, one point that is significant at the outset is the use of the term "Jesus Christ." For "Christ" is not, strictly speaking, a proper name; it is a title;

it means "the Anointed," "the Messiah." But Jesus and His office have become so fused together, so indissolubly united, that you cannot think of the one without the other; and thus "Christ" has come to be a proper name alongside the name of "Jesus." The unity of the Person is expressed in that phrase as well. For the term "Jesus Christ," as it is used in the Church, is not simply an affirmation that Jesus is the Messiah. It is more than that. It was not uncommon in second-century heresies, and even earlier, for a distinction to be made between Jesus and Christ, a distinction which has, in fact, emerged again in our own time. By "Jesus" was meant the historical person, Jesus of Nazareth, the prophet; and by "Christ" was meant the heavenly Being who came upon Him at His Baptism, but left Him before His crucifixion. Now over against all this type of false teaching, which is familiar to us from the New Testament itself, as in the First Epistle

of John, for example, where it is the doctrine of Antichrist to distinguish between Jesus and Christ, the Christian Church affirms that He is one indivisible personality, not a human being who is temporarily associated with a Divine power, but one who in the very basis of His being belongs to the side of God.

When we look further at the facts which are enumerated as vital to the Christian faith, some of us may feel that things are omitted which we should have wished to be included. This, which is essentially a sound feeling, has found considerable expression in the last century. We pass at a bound in the Apostles' Creed from the birth of Jesus to His Passion. And all the intervening life and experience of Jesus and His teaching and His gracious ministry—these are not mentioned or emphasised. In the case of a creed it does not so much matter, since in brief form we are singling out some of the vital and elementary things about our

Lord. But for ourselves it is very important that this lacuna should be made good in our own thought of Jesus. That is one of the great things which the nineteenth century did for us : it restored to us, in a sense in which no age of the Church has ever known it since the time of the Apostles, the historical personality of Jesus as He lived and moved among men. And so while we are thinking of the great facts that are mentioned in the Creed, we must not forget to include in them the earthly ministry on which so much importance is laid in our own time. This change in emphasis was partly due to the process of historical criticism. Criticism, in the hands of scholars like Strauss, had seemed to strike at the very vitals of the Christian religion by dissolving the Gospel history into a small kernel of fact with a large wrapping of myth. And the instinct of the Church at once felt that here something was attacked which it was vital for it to

defend. And so the long controversy went on, which was initiated now nearly a hundred years ago. It concentrated the attention of Christians on the Gospels in a way in which it had not been concentrated for a long time, and gave to us a new type of biography of Christ, that with which we have become familiar in these later days. That form of treatment has studied with the minutest care and fullest enthusiasm all the records which have come down to us as to the life and teaching of Jesus. It has been concerned above all things to know what that life was and what was the mind of Jesus, and how we could apply His teaching to the problems of our own time. This was a very great advance; it immeasurably deepened our apprehension of Jesus and the New Testament, and it did so for this reason, that it restored history to its rightful prominence in the belief of the Church, which for long centuries had been too exclusively concerned with dogmatics.

And that leads me on to a point of the utmost importance. One of the most vital things for us to recognise is the indissoluble alliance between Christianity and history. There are many who think it would be a great advantage to Christianity if it could dissolve its connexion with historical facts, if we should centre our attention on the great ideals, and should lay our stress on the presentation of the personality, without pressing the question, Did this Personality ever live or not ? or did He do the work attributed to Him ? We have, it is said, the presentation of the character ; let us take that as our ideal ; we need not trouble to raise the issue whether after all the Gospel record contains true history or not. Now the reason alleged for this advice is that Christianity would be in a much less vulnerable position if we could leave out the facts and limit ourselves to the ideas. When we insist that certain facts are necessary to Christianity we at once

raise the question, Did those facts really happen or not? Where history comes, you cannot exclude criticism, and where criticism is admitted, we cannot foresee to what conclusion the process, conducted from first to last with unbiassed scientific investigation, may lead us at the last. We are therefore urged to get clear away from all these critical and historical problems, not to worry ourselves over them, but simply to think of the great ideals and principles and rest assured that with them we have sufficient for our purpose. I believe that it would be fatal for Christians to accept this advice. If we did so, what would be our position? We imagine that we escape from criticism by our refusal to emphasise historical facts; but if we escape from criticism of one kind, we still have to face criticism of another. And the criticism of the other kind would be the criticism of the very ideas that we have said were most fundamental and necessary to us. We should have left our

facts behind and taken our ideas with us, but only to find that these ideas themselves, on which we had staked our all, would be attacked in their turn. If historical criticism can no longer touch us, philosophical criticism can and will, and so will ethical criticism as well. People will say, Why should we believe in your ideals ; why should we accept your moral principles ? They will criticise them, and we shall be without the guarantee of the historical facts by which they had previously been protected. For good or for evil we must stand by the historical facts. If we were to regard them as irrelevant to the value of our religion, Christianity would become a different religion from any legitimate form of it known to history ; it could no longer rightly bear the name. It is not, of course, all facts which are recorded about Jesus that are vital to us. That is perfectly true, but there are crucial facts, facts which cannot be surrendered without making a grievous and fatal

wound in the whole structure of Christian truth. It makes all the difference when we are thinking about principles or character if we can say, This was a Person who really lived, whose life and character attested the truth of His message, who exhibited these principles working in His own life and death, and whose teaching had behind it all the weight of His personal authority. If, on the other hand, we cheerfully say it does not matter whether such a person as Jesus of Nazareth ever lived or died, or it does not matter whether we have any accurate information about Him, Christianity becomes a totally different religion, a religion largely robbed of its unique intrinsic worth, and no longer affording solid ground for our assurance of its truth. That, then, is the reason why we must follow the Apostles' Creed, not simply in the affirmation "I believe in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord," but in its claim that much of what follows is itself integral to the Christian religion,

and cannot be removed from it without vitally impoverishing its quality.

But now I return to the designation "Jesus Christ." This reminds us that Jesus stands in an historical context. Here again we note how closely allied Christianity is with history, not only with the history of its Founder, but with the history of which it was the climax. The great truth which our modern study of the Bible has brought home to us is that revelation is not primarily the communication of doctrine or of moral principles ; it is the revelation of God Himself through a process in history. When we turn to the Old Testament and read it with fresh eyes, and think of its first impression on us, we are greatly struck by the large proportion of what seems to us to be quite irrelevant to the purpose of a revelation at all. And we ask why have we such a long book, a book concerned so much with secular history and events which are not edifying, instead of a short, compact

handbook of moral and religious truth, one we can readily understand and appropriate. That is because we approach the idea of revelation from the wrong standpoint. It is not, as is commonly supposed, a disclosure of abstract doctrine in the first instance, but a process in which God shows Himself active in human life and history. When this is realised we begin to see a new meaning in much of the Old Testament that seemed to us quite irrelevant. We see God taking the whole nation as a medium for His revelation, working in that uncongenial mass, gradually subduing the people to His will, and through their history bringing them into fellowship with Himself, shaping their character and disclosing His own by the events through which they passed. Then, rising higher from the history of the people to that of chosen individuals, He made Himself known through their personal experience. And at last, in the fullness of time, revelation which had come through

personal experience, was completed in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. When we ask ourselves in what way do we gain our truest thoughts of God, our answer is, We do not gain them through the teaching on abstract doctrine we find in the Bible; but we gain them by steeping ourselves in the record of the life of Jesus, because there; in that human life, we see God translating Himself out of the speech of eternity into the speech of time. We look on Jesus and know that to know Him is to know God. Our truest, our most vivid thoughts of God come to us as we familiarise ourselves not with the teaching only, but even more with the personality and character and action of Jesus.

But Jesus is not only the supreme Revealer of God; He is also the world's Redeemer from its sin. That is brought out in the later Articles about His passion, His death and His resurrection for our salvation. There we have God doing His most characteristic work. God never so

fully revealed Himself as He did in the life and character and, above all, in the death and suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ for our sin. There we realise that we put our finger on the supreme revelation of God given in the person of His only-begotten Son. But then, in virtue of what did He impart this revelation? In virtue of the great affirmation we have made of Him that He is God's only Son. Ultimately the question always comes back to this: What do we think of Jesus Christ? What, in the very essence of His being, was He? Was Jesus Christ the highest and greatest thing humanity has been able to produce in personality and in character, in spotless perfection and moral beauty? Was He the greatest achievement of mankind in that sphere, as Shakespeare is the greatest in the sphere of poetry? Are we to approach God and ask for His judgment on man to be determined by what the human race has in Jesus been able to produce? Is

Jesus our ultimate word to God ; or is He something entirely different, not humanity's creation, but God's last and best gift to man ? Is He God's word to man or man's word to God ? That is the ultimate question of the Christian faith. Our answer is given with sure conviction, that Jesus ultimately belongs to the side of God, and not to the side of man ; that in the very basis and essence of His nature He belongs to that Godhead whom we adore as the Trinity in unity. In infinite pity and gracious love He took our humanity upon Himself ; He knew what our experience was from the inside ; He understood it to its farthest reaches and its finest sensibilities. And thus understanding it, He has brought to us through His Incarnation and His redemptive work that perfect peace with God and that solution which answers for us our deepest and greatest problems, which gives to us a certainty and victory in this life, and ultimately the joy of a blessed immortality.

BY THE REV. GEORGE JACKSON, B.A., D.D., *Professor of English and the English Bible, Didsbury College, Manchester.*

THE “Holy Spirit”—not the “Holy Ghost.” Would it not be as well if this now quite meaningless word were allowed to drop out of our religious vocabulary? There is, of course, only one word—*πνεῦμα*—in the Greek Testament, and it is quite adequately rendered by our English word “Spirit.” Why our Revisers of 1881 left “Ghost” in our version it is difficult to understand. As Dr. Agar Beet long ago pointed out,¹ it cannot be used at all without the adjective “Holy”—we cannot speak of “the Ghost of God”; nor even with it if a genitive follows—we must say, “the Holy Spirit of God,” “the Holy Spirit of promise,” and so on. We have

¹ *Expositor*, 2nd series, vol. ii. p. 108.

nothing to lose, therefore, and much to gain, by following the example of the American Revisers, and using only the sufficient and intelligible term, the "Holy Spirit."

I

And what do we mean by the Holy Spirit? "Nothing is easier," says Newman, "than to use the word God and mean nothing by it." And the saying is true of the Holy Spirit. Little groups within the Christian Church have fastened on a few familiar New Testament phrases—*the baptism of the Spirit, led by the Spirit, filled with the Spirit*, and so forth—and have made them into something like the watchwords and badges of a party. But when we ask what religious experience, what spiritual reality of any kind, lies behind the words that are so freely bandied about, we are often at a loss to answer. There is perhaps no subject concerning which good people have so chloroformed

their minds with words as this. And if we turn to textbooks of theology, their language is often equally unsatisfying. One has the feeling—I speak for myself at least—that the writers are toying with words, that they are making distinctions which are meaningless because they represent no reality that our minds can apprehend. It may be true that, as the Athanasian Creed has it, “the Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son : neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.” All I can say is that I can find nothing either in Scripture or in experience to tell me what the words mean. And so it has come to pass that between the jargon of the “Holiness Convention” on the one hand, and the elaborate mystifications of the theologian on the other, the average man in our Churches has wellnigh ceased to think or care about the subject at all. “Daddy,” said a little girl of my acquaintance, “I can understand what you mean by the Father and

the Son, but I haven't any use for the Holy Ghost." And there, in the refreshing frankness of a little child's speech, the thoughts of many hearts are revealed. I confess frankly that, in the earlier years of my ministry, few incidents in the New Testament perplexed me more than the story of Pentecost ; on no day in the year did I find it so hard to preach as on Whitsunday. Of course, one could repeat the accepted commonplaces, but there was nothing vital in them, they rang hollow and unreal ; and so, for the most part, I did what so many do—I took refuge in silence, and passed by on the other side. I think now that I know what to say when Whitsuntide comes round ; the story of Pentecost is no longer a stone of stumbling.

II

Let us return to our question : What do we mean by the Holy Spirit ? And when we open the New Testament at once

we are impressed with the fact that, numerous as are the references to the Spirit—St. Paul alone, it is said, has no less than a hundred and twenty—there is nothing that suggests a fixed and definite doctrine in the minds of the writers. What it reveals to us, as Dr. Newton Clarke says, is “not so much a doctrine as a consciousness.” In other words, we are here at the stage of experience rather than of definition. Definition came later, and sometimes, unhappily, we have allowed definitions, framed with the help of intellectual conceptions that are no longer ours, to come between us and the experience they were meant to convey. But in the New Testament experience has not, as yet, crystallised. The language is everywhere fluid and mobile. The very variety of terms under which the Divine Spirit is referred to—*the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit* simply—is typical of the fluidity both of thought and expression which

characterises the New Testament writers throughout. What is essentially the same spiritual experience is described, sometimes in one way, sometimes in another, so that it is quite impossible to reduce their words to the harmony of a logical and self-consistent whole. Were the framers of the Apostles' Creed, one wonders, themselves dimly conscious of this when they left its third article—"I believe in the Holy Ghost"—without any additional and elucidatory clauses such as follow and expound the first and second articles? ¹

In thinking about the matter for ourselves it is best to begin where in all our thoughts about the Divine Being it is always best to begin: it is best to begin with Jesus. He is *the image*, the portrait,

¹ See Denney's *Jesus and the Gospel*, p. 401. Cp. also the language of the *Te Deum*, in which the reference to the Holy Spirit reads almost like a parenthesis slipped in among the multiplied clauses in praise of the Father and the Son: "Also the Holy Ghost, the Comforter."

of the invisible God. Therefore, to know God we must look at Jesus; we must interpret the unseen and unknown God in terms of the seen and known Christ. He that hath seen Him hath seen the Father. And in the same way we understand what is meant by the Holy Spirit only when we look at Christ. To leave Him for subtle speculations concerning the Divine nature—"the metaphysics of the Trinity"—is but to beguile ourselves with an illusion of knowledge which has no religious value.

Is not this the way of approach that seems to be suggested by the order in which the phrases stand in the familiar word of benediction : *the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ—the love of God—the communion of the Holy Spirit?* When we stop to think of it, that is not the order we should have expected. Is it not rather this : first, the love of God and then the grace of Christ and the communion of the Spirit? In the baptismal formula the

words are, *Baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*: Father, Son, Holy Spirit—there is what one may call the natural, the theological order. Why, then, does the apostle depart from it in his word of benediction? Because while the other is, as I have said, the natural, theological order, this is the order of experience. The first great word in the Christian vocabulary is not God, it is Christ. Whatever knowledge of God we have, whether as Father or as Holy Spirit, whatever experience of His love or fellowship, is ours only through the grace of Christ. In Him are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden, and except by Him no man cometh to the knowledge either of the Father or of the Spirit. It would seem, therefore, that we shall best give intelligibility and reality to our thinking and best serve the interests of our personal religious life, if we make no attempt to distinguish between the Holy Spirit and the living Christ, and learn to

think of "the presence of the Spirit" as but another way of indicating the spiritual presence of Christ. And when we turn to the writers of the New Testament we find that though neither this nor any other way of speaking of the Holy Spirit is constant, it is one quite commonly adopted by them. The point is of such capital importance that it may be well to illustrate it in some little detail. For convenience' sake we may arrange the relevant passages in four small groups.

1. Let us take first the farewell discourses of Jesus as they are reported in the fourteenth and following chapters of the Fourth Gospel. How much of these chapters is due to Jesus Himself, and how much to the mind of His reporter, we need not now pause to inquire. For our present purpose it makes no difference what view we take. Indeed, since at the moment it is not so much the mind of Jesus as the mind of the first Christians we are seeking to understand and to interpret, these

chapters are the more pertinent the more they are coloured by the mind of the Evangelist himself. Now throughout them, as has so often been pointed out, no attempt is made to distinguish between the coming of the Holy Spirit, the promised Comforter, and Christ's own coming to abide with and in His disciples. *I will pray the Father, Christ says, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth. . . . The Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things* (xiv. 16, 26). But immediately He adds, *I will not leave you desolate : I come unto you. . . . A little while, and ye behold Me no more ; and again a little while, and ye shall see Me. . . . Now ye have sorrow ; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice* (xiv. 18 ; xvi. 16, 22). Similarly Christ says, speaking of the Spirit, *He abideth with you, and shall be in you* (xiv. 17) ; and then again He says of Himself, *Abide*

in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine ; so neither can ye, except ye abide in Me (xv. 4). Indeed, we have in these chapters all the three forms : *I will come—He will come—We will come* ; and, apparently, all mean substantially the same thing.

2. We turn next to the great word of promise with which our First Gospel closes : *Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world*. Again, and for the reason already given, I pass over the question raised by modern criticism. Whether this was a word actually spoken by Jesus, or, as some think, a word put into His lips by men who had had experience of the truth of it, for our present purpose—or, indeed, for any purpose—matters but little. Either way it witnesses to the certainty of the first disciples that their Lord was still with them. When, then, we turn to the subsequent history, how does this consciousness de-

clare itself? Sometimes in this way : *They went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed* (Mark xvi. 20); and sometimes in this : *It seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us ; or in this : We are witnesses of these things ; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that obey Him* (Acts xv. 28 ; v. 32). In one place we read : *They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden of the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia ; and then, again, in the very next verse, this : And when they were come over against Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia ; and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not* (Acts xvi. 67). Does not language like this say plainly that whatever nice distinctions the theology of a later day might draw, in the experience of the first disciples the presence of the Spirit had no other meaning than the presence of the living Christ Himself ?

3. There is a similar identification in the Letters to the Seven Churches in the Book of the Revelation. Each letter begins with a formula in description of Christ. The formulas vary, but one may be quoted as typical of the rest : *These things saith the Son of God, who hath His eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like unto burnished brass* (ii. 18). And each letter closes with the exhortation : *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches* (ii. 7, etc.).

4. Most significant of all, perhaps, is the language in which St. Paul describes the new life which was both his and theirs to whom his words were written. *Know ye not*, he writes to the Corinthians, *that ye are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you ?* And again to the same people he says, *Know ye not that Jesus Christ is in you ?* (1 Cor. iii. 16 ; 2 Cor. xiii. 5). *I live*, he says, *and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me ;* yet a little later

in the same letter he makes it clear that to be Christ's and to *live by the Spirit* are but two ways of saying the same thing (Gal. ii. 20 ; v. 24, 25). Still more striking is the quick interchange of phrase in the following passage : *Ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin ; but the spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you He that raised up Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies through His Spirit that dwelleth in you* (Rom. viii. 9-11). Here not only is the Spirit spoken of both as *the Spirit of God* and *the Spirit of Christ*, but the Christian life itself is indistinguishably the life of the indwelling Christ and the life of the indwelling Spirit ; and to speak of these as though they were rival or parallel experiences is surely to make

distinction where no distinction exists.¹ After this it does not surprise us to find the Apostle saying explicitly, *the Lord is the Spirit* (2 Cor. iii. 17); and to try sharply to distinguish between them is only to lose ourselves in that unreality which has been the bane of so much of man's thinking about God.

It is not, of course, suggested that all the Apostle's language concerning the Holy Spirit, and still less all that is said elsewhere in the New Testament, can be brought within this formula of identification. If there are many passages, like those which have been quoted, in which no distinction is discoverable between the Holy Spirit and the living Christ, there are others in which with equal clearness a distinction is made. Elsewhere, as was indeed to be expected, the writer appears to be moving on the lower plane of Old Testament conceptions of the Spirit. So that, as has already been pointed out, it

¹ Mackintosh's *Person of Christ*, p. 58.

seems impossible to find any formula into which we can fit all our New Testament records of the manifold and varied activities of the Divine Spirit. Nevertheless it is, I believe, by the way of practical identification that we shall most adequately interpret the experience of Christian men whether in the first days or in our own, and that we shall best deliver ourselves from that web of unreal words which vulgar and learned alike have in the past so often woven about our feet.

In this way, I say, we can best interpret the experience of men to-day. Let me give one illustration. There is perhaps no more familiar incident in modern Christian biography than that related of R. W. Dale of Birmingham. He was writing an Easter sermon, and when half-way through the thought of the risen Lord broke in upon him as it had never done before. "‘Christ is alive,’ I said to myself; ‘alive!’ and then I paused; ‘alive!’ and then I paused again; ‘alive! Can

that really be true? living as I myself am?' I got up and walked about repeating, 'Christ is living! Christ is living!' At first it seemed strange and hardly true, but at last it came upon me as a burst of sudden glory; yes, Christ is living. It was to me a new discovery. I thought that all along I had believed it; but not until that moment did I feel sure about it. I then said, 'My people shall know it; I shall preach about it again and again until they believe it as I do now.' " No reference is made, it will be noted, in the record of this remarkable experience to the Holy Spirit. Yet was not this, in a very real sense, Dale's Pentecost? Was not that swift uprush into consciousness of the truth, "Christ is living! Christ is living!" *essentially* one with the experience of the disciples in the upper room in Jerusalem? One of Dale's unfulfilled ambitions, his son tells us, was the writing of a book on the Holy Spirit. If he had lived to write it, could he himself have

drawn any real distinction between what the New Testament calls *receiving the Holy Spirit*, and that unforgettable Eastertide experience of his own ?

And, apparently, it is in this direction that Christian thought is now steadily moving. Thus, in one of the *Later Letters* of Dr. Marcus Dods, he writes to a correspondent, "I am interested in your discovery of the exalted Christ, and there is much to talk over in that direction. I doubt if we can make much of a personal Spirit interposed between Christ and us." "The life in the Spirit," says Dr. Garvie, "is indistinguishable from the fellowship with the living Christ. . . . Christian experience does not and cannot distinguish between Christ and the Spirit as Christian doctrine has tried to do."¹ Dr. Denney, in the Cunningham Lectures published after his death, is equally explicit: "To be a believer in Christ and to have the

¹ *The Christian Certainty and the Modern Perplexity*, p. 179. See also Mackintosh's *Person of Christ*, p. 374.

Spirit are identically the same. . . . The doctrine of the Holy Spirit, as an element in the ecclesiastical doctrine of the Trinity, goes far beyond this, and far beyond anything which the New Testament defines. But," he continues, "we can think of no presence of the Spirit except the spiritual presence of Christ Himself."

But, it may be asked, what then becomes of our Trinitarian theology? Is not this identification of the Son and the Spirit a move in the direction of the old Sabellian heresy? To which perhaps it might be replied that, as Canon Streeter says, "Popular Christianity is Tritheism with reservations," and that if one had to choose he might with good reason prefer the way of the ancient Sabellian to that of the modern Tritheist. But I am not a theologian, and it is not with the high mysteries of Trinitarian doctrine that I am here concerned. I am only attempting the much humbler task of seeking to interpret, in terms level with our own

experience, what lies behind the non-theological language of the writers of the New Testament, and I believe we shall best understand it when in all that they tell us concerning the Holy Spirit's activities, guiding, teaching, inspiring men, we learn to read their own vivid, unbroken consciousness of their Lord's presence with them. Then what has often seemed but as airy, unsubstantial cloud-rack will turn to solid ground beneath our feet where men to-day may walk in joyous strength and freedom.

III

This, then, I take it, is the truth which the Church's doctrine of the Holy Spirit is meant to declare and to safeguard—that He who was “born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried,” is still with us. When we gather for Christian worship it is not as those who come to strew with flowers the tomb of a dead Master ;

we rejoice in the presence of a living Lord. Here, it has been rightly said, in the one conviction that Jesus is at this moment conscious and supreme, is the true differentia of the Christian faith. When Festus, the Roman governor, in his report to Agrippa concerning a strange prisoner who had been left on his hands, spoke of *one Jesus, who was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive*, all unconsciously he put his finger on the great central issue of the centuries between faith and unbelief. Jesus had been put to death by the Jews; if, as Festus supposed, that death had been the end of Him, then the tomb in Joseph's garden was not only the tomb of His body, it was the tomb of His religion. But always, with St. Paul, the Church has affirmed that He is alive. It is said that once Luther was found, at a moment of peril and fear, sitting in an abstracted mood, tracing on the table with his finger the words "*Vivit ! Vivit !*" "*He lives ! He lives !*"

“ Loud mockers in the roaring street
 Say Christ is crucified again,
 Twice pierced His gospel-bearing feet,
 Twice broken His great heart in vain. . . .
So in the street I hear men say :
Yet Christ is with me all the day.”

It was in that faith, or rather, out of that consciousness, that the New Testament was written. The whole book throbs with the glory and wonder of it. Without it it could never have been written at all. Some one has remarked very truly on the entire absence from the New Testament of any *In Memoriam* strain :

“ Thou and I have shaken hands,
 Till growing winters lay me low ;
 My paths are in the fields I know,
 And thine in undiscover'd lands.

I wage not any feud with Death
 For changes wrought on form and face ;

.

For this alone on Death I wreak
 The wrath that garners in my heart :
 He put our lives so far apart
 We cannot hear each other speak.”

Now there is nothing in the least like that in the New Testament feeling about Christ. "No apostle, no New Testament writer," says Dr. Denney, "ever *remembered* Christ." The saying is half paradox and all truth—all truth at least in this sense, that they never thought of Him as belonging to the past. He was never simply a gracious and pathetic tradition. They never mourned for Him as for a friend they had lost ; for indeed they had not lost Him ; He was with them in a new and spiritual fellowship which nought on earth could break. This was the truth which first fully broke upon them at Pentecost, to remain with them through all the years, "the fountain light of all their day, the master light of all their seeing."

Together with that great central experience went two others, inseparable from it and finding their explanation in it. One is the strange, rich, contagious gladness in which all our records of the first believers are enwrapped. *It came to pass,*

while Jesus blessed them, He parted from them, and was carried up into heaven. And they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, blessing God. Before, when He had spoken of going from them, sorrow had filled their hearts, but now their sorrow is turned into joy. After Pentecost the bells are always ringing; go where we will in these early years we are never away from their sound. The disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit: this is the token in every epistle.

But there was something more and greater than this. As autumn follows spring and summer, so from this rich blossoming-time, this warm, quick life of the emotions, sprang in due season the richer fruitage of the moral life. It is here we see most clearly the distinction between the Old and New Testament's conception of the Spirit. In the Old Testament the Spirit denotes God at work,

God putting forth power, but it is only occasionally moral power. It is significant that only twice in the whole of the Old Testament is the Spirit spoken of as the "Holy Spirit." In the New Testament, on the other hand, the moral element dominates every other; the work of the Spirit is specifically toward moral ends, and the making of good men. *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance*: it is in a saying like this that the real interest of the writers of the New Testament discovers itself. They do not speculate about the nature of the Divine Spirit; they are concerned with the work, the power, the fruit, of the Spirit. All that claims to be spiritual must be ethically judged, and since, as we have seen, the presence of the Spirit is none other than the spiritual presence of Christ Himself, it is His words and life that must be the standard of judgment.

There are amongst us religious com-

munities that have laid special emphasis on what is called "the witness of the Spirit." And in so doing they have done well, for the phrase stands for a real and great fact of Christian consciousness. But we need not only a "witness" that will convince and satisfy ourselves; we need a "witness" that will convince and satisfy others, and for them the works of the Spirit are the witness of the Spirit. *Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples.* So, too, and so only shall we win others to discipleship to the same Lord.

BY THE REV. GEO. SHILLITO, *Minister of Hope*
Congregational Church, Oldham

“Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself up for it.”—Ephesians v. 25.

AMIDST our present experience of manifold distress, there are granted unto us signs of the coming of a better day. If in our songs before sunrise we cannot yet say “All the distance is white with the soundless feet of the sun,” we see, at least, “a light too strong for a star.” In Ireland men of good heart have seen even a great light. In Geneva and Washington the preludes of a world’s peace are sounding—“a song too loud for a lark.”

Amongst these tokens of hope is the great word of the Bishops assembled in the Conference at Lambeth in 1920: “We acknowledge all those who believe in our

Lord Jesus Christ, and have been baptized into the name of the Holy Trinity, as sharing with us membership in the universal Church of Christ, which is His Body.”

It may be long before Anglican and Nonconformist Churchmen work out all that is involved in that great word ; much deliberation and more grace will be required before the unity which now we both acknowledge can find exact corporate affirmation in the world, but with that word the controversy of centuries received notice of dismissal.

Like Phineas the priest and the princes of the old congregation, you have looked across the Jordan to the separated fellowships of Reuben and Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh, and you have seen that their altar is not one of perverse rebellion and trespass, and you do not deny our portion in the Lord. Shall not then our Israel—our whole Israel—speak no more of going up against each other—

tribe against tribe—in war, and shall not the altars, which we wrongly imagined to be signs of separation, be henceforth the witnesses unto us that the Lord is God ? And I, speaking, though unworthily, for a half-tribe of Manasseh (Dr. Roberts possibly represented the other half) can claim this at least for my fathers in the faith, that they never lost vision of a Church, Holy and Catholic. When, with grave face and breaking heart, they left those lovely dwellings of the soul that “crown England so fair,” they were moved by no sudden stress of passion. They did not go out with haste to coalesce into churches only by afterthought, and in deference to the pressure of the years ; they left a Church to find a Church. Already, as they deemed, they had greeted it from afar, and for the sake of it they confessed themselves strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Hence there has been, and that not seldom, a certain subtle sympathy between the true Con-

gregationalist and the High Churchman. Bishop Gore and Dr. Dale do not always say the same things, but they speak in the same tone. Some of you have not been unwilling to hear the minister of Carr's-lane expound the wonder of the atoning love of God in Christ; some of us owe our faith in the Incarnation of the Son of God to the Bishop; but such men speak to us with authority because we know that they do not despise the Church of God. And in these days not only do we understand each other with a growing sympathy, but we discern movement in the Governing order of our Churches. Your new Church Councils suggest our Church Meetings; our Moderator is rather like your Bishop, "writ large." Our lines are no longer sternly parallel and remote. They begin to converge.

I do not conceive that it is my task this morning to propound a theory of the Church—it would be a superfluous under-

taking in this historic place. After all, the true Christian has always a certain mystical endowment, though he rarely develops it or trusts it as he should. He has some direct vision of Deity, and a sense of the Church; he discerns the Body. In the glad moment of your eucharistic joy, my brethren of this Church, when you kneel before this altar, and with the bread and wine receive afresh the inspiration of the very presence of our Lord; when you take the gifts of eternal love from the hands of a priest, who is yet a brother, and you feel in the heart of the man kneeling at your side—comrade known, or stranger within your gates—the same tide of adoring love and gratitude that has brought you, too, to the very gate of heaven; in such a moment you do not ask for a philosophy of the Church, you feel that you are within the arms of Christ, and that *is* the Church. The Church is His Body, and you discern it.

Believe me, brethren of the Anglican Church, in our simpler forms of celebration we also have these moments of vision. We, too, discern the Body, and, without word or question, rest in the everlasting arms. For all who find Christ find a universe, and the Church is within that universe. We are exploring its powers and forces, its life and order. No wonder we bring different reports of our discoveries. Men of science dealing with a finite realm of things do not find it easy to display its apprehended details as a unity. They see things so differently that sometimes they speak to one another with much severity, as if they were mere theologians. We are the argonauts of the infinite universe of God and the soul. It is a vast enterprise and we are so little. Let us be patient with each other's pride of disparate discovery ! We shall find the things we have truly seen resolved in unity at last, for Christ is all in all.

At any rate, the Church has found us

—then let us love it as Christ loved it, even unto the giving up of ourselves for it. We need a fellowship, and here we find a fellowship. Let us love and cherish it! And we ought to love it more and not less because of the very frailties we discern in each other. We fathers do not love our boys less, because we see and understand their faults. Their very failures make them the more dear to us. (They are no worse than we were, anyhow.) Every virtue we perceive in a fellow-member is a contribution to our own characters, and a well-spring of our thanksgiving. Every sin is an occasion for our charity, and an opportunity for our influence. This living together has all the promise of life's fullness. The family, holy as it is, mighty as it is in its sanctifying power, is too narrow a thing for the complete discipline of a soul. "These fathers of families," said a despairing French statesman, "are capable of anything." "These happily-married women

do not understand," said a pioneer of the redemption of womanhood. The club, genial, supporting, enlightening, as it often is, cannot give us the tone and atmosphere of the Church. The city and the State are spheres of fellowship—great realms of service and experience—but too vast, too intricate, too heterogeneous to put upon the soul that intimate personal touch that heals and guides and restrains.

The Christian Church in its ideal offers the true fellowship. Let us achieve that ideal! Our Lord's own example constrains us. He loved the meeting-place of His people, and frequented it by habit. He was happy in company with His disciples; He chose them to be with Him. He gathered men and women together by the lakeside, and in the desert, and in the mount. If only two or three meet in My name, He says, though no longer amongst you in the flesh—still I will be of the company. It is this Presence that makes the fellowship. Nay, if we come together

—which God forbid!—in some derelict hour of the soul, without faith, charity, or peace; so that it would be a travesty of things to plead “in the Name”; so that we do not discern the Body at all—still He is there, weeping it may be, over our hard and unperceiving Jerusalem. But if we come, sinful but repentant; in charity and love and peace, how the warmth of it thrills us! We come from the littleness of our cramped experiences, our warring and contending factions, the dwellings in which we are caught by the little ambitions of the world, and the warmth of the divine fellowship surrounds us. “How amiable are Thy dwellings, O Lord of Hosts!”

“And thou—what needst with thy tribes’ black tents,
Who hast the red pavilion of my heart?”

To serve within that fellowship, so as to be always a fellow labourer with its Head, in the hope that at last it may be found

a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it may be holy and without blemish, is worth giving up ourselves for it as Christ did—worth pain, heartbreak, poverty and toil. Two public schoolboys were talking with me the other night, and one said, “Our fellows used to take orders but they don’t now,” and the other, from a great Nonconformist school replied, “And none of ours enter the ministry now, they know better.” What has blasted the young chivalry of the Church? the Church of which someone has sung—

“For her my tears shall fall,
For her my prayers ascend,
For her my cares and toils be given,
Till toils and cares shall end”?

To develop life’s fullness in fellowship is the Church’s task, and in that task it perceives the love of Christ; but after all this is only a derivative activity of the

Church; its primary activity is evangelism.

Before men are gathered within the arms of Christ, they must be sought and found. The great example is granted unto us: Jesus, the good Shepherd, goeth after that which is lost until He finds it; and when He hath found it He layeth it on His shoulders rejoicing. That is St. Paul's conception of the primary passion of the Church. In all his invasions of heathen realms he regards himself as the foremost advancing flame of a whole Church, which is or ought to be, on fire with passion to save the world. No higher praise does he give to any local Church than to that at Philippi: "ye had fellowship"—went shares—"with my affliction"; "I thank God for your fellowship in the furtherance of the Gospel from the first day until now." The very constitution of the Church proclaims its purpose—apostles, prophets, evangelists, and then pastors and leaders—and Christ filling all in all—

the Christ who seeks the lost lamb and then carries it in His bosom.

As we think of the Christ-loved Church, we must think of a Church that is a redeeming body—"His Body." "This is My Body broken for you." Many an Ephesian convert heard these words and thought of St. Paul's own message, "But now in Christ Jesus, ye who were once far off are brought nigh in the blood of Christ." The Broken Body and the Church were evangelists, each proclaiming in the other the need and secret of the soul's redemption—first the redemption, then the completing fellowship. The Church is an army, and worthy of the love men give to an army which is ready to give itself up at a nation's call. Can we not imagine an army of peace with its triumphs far more renowned than those of war? Can we not foresee the Church going forth as an army, in hundreds, then thousands, and then ten thousand thousands of its most consecrated men and

women, into every realm of human experience—thought, action, and life—where Christ is not named—into outcast England and darkest Africa ; into India and China, carrying everywhere and in everyone the powers of the redeeming Body and the healing fellowship, in such fashion, and with such desire, that all the passion of the Church hitherto shall seem—

“ As moonlight unto sunlight, as water unto wine ” ?

The Church cannot be educated into such a supreme passion, nor can it become mighty unto spiritual victory by merely recasting systems and methods ; if it is to conquer it must be loved into invincibility. It must see the cross in the sky, and conquer in this. And it must be loved into unity.

This Christ of whom St. Paul is writing is a Christ highly exalted. How he labours to convey something of the glory of this Christ to his readers ! Through

the Beloved comes the glory of God's grace, and every spiritual blessing. The eternal God sums up all things in Christ—Christ seated at the right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power, and every name in this world and that which is to come. This is Christ crucified, and it is through the cross that He holds the name that is above every name.

This is the Christ that loves the Church. And the Church? Just a few people—not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble—gathered in humble homes in lanes and alleys of imperial cities. The pomp and splendour of the great Temples,—Artemis, Aphrodite, Athene—and little companies turning aside for prayer and praise, teaching and communion! A little Church, but a great Christ! Little Church in the hand and heart of Christ! “Fear not, little flock, for it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” To such a community St. Paul said with

simple confidence, "Then cometh the end, when Christ shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father"—the far-off divine event! St. Paul loved his churches, and, giving himself up for them, loved them into power.

The last century has been called the Century of Hope, but most of its formative influences had but little hope in Christ. They reduced Him to a Galilean idyll, a humanitarian enthusiast, to a "value" of God. The hopeful century ended in the "roaring nineties," the South African War, and it carefully prepared by its degrading international greeds the cataclysm of 1914. This century can be redeemed by hope—but it must be a hope in a Christ exalted and enthroned. And a Church loved by Christ, as St. Paul knew Him—by the Christ as He is—and loved by its members with the love that fears no cross, can speak the kingly word that can save the souls of men and the soul of the world.

“When the nations lie in blood, and their Kings a broken
brood,

Look up, O most sorrowful of daughters !

Lift up thy head and hark what sounds are in the
dark,

For His feet are coming to thee on the waters !”

I believe in the Forgiveness of Sins

V

BY THE REV. JAMES ADAMSON, M.A., B.Sc., *St. Aidan's
Presbyterian Church of England, Didsbury*

“Who is this that even forgiveth sins?”—St. Luke
vii. 49.

I DO not know how you read this question, which we find in the story of the meeting between our Lord and the penitent in the house of Simon the Pharisee. But what I hear in it is not a tone of mockery, nor a cry of anger, but a gasp of surprise. I think the men who asked it were moved by a sense of awe and wonder,

“Like some watcher of the skies,
When a new planet swims into his ken,
Or like stout Cortez, when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific, and all his men
Looked at each other with a wild surmise,
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.”

For they had made an amazing discovery—they had discovered the possibility of forgiveness.

“I believe in the forgiveness of sins.” But I found no doctrine of the Christian faith so hard to believe. My studies had been in the realm of nature; and nature, if she did not “shriek against the creed,” seemed with a loud voice to deny it. I agreed with Bishop Westcott that “the great mystery of the future is forgiveness,” for I could find no indication of it in the present. It seemed to contradict the fundamental law of nature, that an act and its consequences are inseparable. Punishment was a thing I could understand; it was a fact of everyday experience. Nature supplied abundant evidence of punishment; but forgiveness seemed the greatest of all miracles. Now “I believe in the forgiveness of sins.” I still regard it as the greatest of all miracles, but I regard it as a miracle that Jesus Christ has wrought. I be-

lieve that He, and He alone, has made it possible.

In the natural world there is no such thing as forgiveness. There law reigns supreme. Effect follows cause with unchangeable regularity. There is no return of lost opportunities ; there is no obliteration of the past. What is done is done, and there is no recalling it. When we speak of the forgiveness of nature, we are using a poetic phrase. I have a slab of sandstone, on which a shower of rain fell millions of years ago ; and you can tell by looking at it how the wind was blowing at the time. That is how nature keeps her books of remembrance. She never forgets, and she never forgives. If you defy her laws, you must endure the consequences. So Science, in its study of nature, finds no doctrine of forgiveness. But it finds much to justify the warning of the Bible—"Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."

Among men it is doubtful whether

there be such a thing as forgiveness—until they have learned it from Jesus Christ. It is not a man's nature to forgive. He is not, physically, built that way. His body with its reflex action is adapted for retaliation. His instinct is to return the blow and to revenge the injury. It is true that there is in man a higher nature which bids him subdue the impulse to retaliation and revenge. And moral teachers keep insisting on the duty of forgiveness. But while they may tell us what our duty is with regard to injuries that we have suffered, they have no message of forgiveness for wrongs that we have done. They tell us to do better in the future, but there is no word of pardon for the past.

We find no better outlook when we turn to the various religions that have been devised by men, in which men have expressed their thoughts of God and of their relation to Him. Free forgiveness, that will also satisfy the conscience, is a

thing of which they have no hope, indeed no conception. There is only an anxious search for something that will serve to atone for sin—or rather to make expiation for it—or for some way of securing the divine favour, so that shortcomings may be overlooked.

In the time of Jesus men held two opinions on this subject. Some held that forgiveness was not needed, and others that it was not possible. Most of them held both opinions, but regarding different people. The righteous had kept the law, and were accepted; the sinners had broken it, and were condemned; and that was the end of it. And these opinions are still held to-day. Some tell us that forgiveness is not needed, and others tell us that it is not possible. And the words of Jesus, which so startled those who heard them, may be the very message that we need. To us also they may bring our first glimpse of a country that still waits to be explored, a land full of

hopes and possibilities beyond our dreams.

“ Who is this that even forgiveth sins ? ” We may well ask the question, for it all turns on that, and it is a matter of grave importance to ourselves. What makes forgiveness so hard to credit ? What makes it, instead of being so simple and easy as some people think, so wonderful and marvellous to those who seek to penetrate its secret ? It is because nature and conscience speak the truth, and the same truth. Law is universal and supreme. God works by law. And God never breaks His laws, not even to forgive. And is that the end of it ? No, that is not the end of it. What if there be a law that provides for forgiveness ? Take an illustration, old and trite, but there must be something in it, for the Master used it. If a man owes you money, and you forgive him the debt, what happens ? You do not undo the fact of the debt—that remains—but you bear the loss yourself.

What does it mean ? What is the principle behind it ? It means that instead of demanding satisfaction you are willing to endure the burden, instead of retaliating you are willing to suffer. And that is the law of forgiveness. If God forgives, it is because He is willing to suffer. That is what solves the mystery of the cross.

A law of nature cannot be broken, but it can be controlled or suspended by the operation of a higher law. A magnet in some cases overcomes the law of gravity. Chemical attraction is more powerful than physical. And now forgiveness itself ranks as a law of God. You remember how Paul puts it, in words which might be called a scientific statement of the gospel : "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." "The law of sin and death"—that is just the kind of law we find in nature ; that is the inevitable sequence of cause and effect. "The soul

that sinneth, it shall die." But from this a higher law, a law of grace, has set us free. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." That is why, while still believing in the laws of nature, I believe in the forgiveness of sins.

If this gospel does not sound so startling now it can only be for the reason that we have grown familiar with it. It has not lost its wonderful significance, but it has lost its novelty for us, and we forget its significance. Yet that old gospel is still "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." There are many things that are old, and yet ever new. The sun is old, but the sunshine is new every morning. The earth is old, but we never tire of the spring flowers. Love is old, but how it thrills the heart to which it comes with

its age-long message. And the gospel is old, but to those who come to know it there is nothing in the world so new and glad and wonderful.

Our watchword to-day, for the individual and for the race, is progress. But the great hindrance to the progress of the race is the sin of the individual; and the great hindrance to the progress of the individual is the burden of the sinful past. We are little helped by the gospel of the scientists, who find law in nature, but find little trace of love. Their stern creed may satisfy the strong, but it is very pitiless toward the weak. We are helped as little by the gospel of the moralists, who speak of duty, but not of deliverance from sin. We burdened men have not the power to reach their high ideals. Our only help and only hope is in the gospel of forgiveness, the gospel that is brought to us by Jesus Christ.

I am not here to-day to discuss the different theories of the Atonement. I

am here to say that "I believe in the forgiveness of sins." And I have tried to tell you why. Let me, in closing, try to put it (*longo intervallo*) somewhat as John Bunyan might have done: In my dream I found myself in a dark valley. Only on the distant hills a light was breaking, and I saw far off the gates of the City of God. I felt within me a longing to be there, for I was sure that was my soul's true home. But I could not take even a single step, for my feet were chained. Men passed me now and then, to whom I cried for help. Some bade me try to shake the fetters off; some told me that the fetters were imaginary. Some pitied me; some scolded me; some jeered at me; some tried to make the fetters easier; but none could set me free. And then came One upon whose kindly face were marks of suffering, and on the hand held out to me I saw a scar. Hope stirred my heart, and in my eagerness to clasp that hand I struggled forward and

fell on my knees before Him. "My son," He said, "I have borne thy sins, and they are all forgiven. Arise and follow Me." And I arose and followed Him.

BY THE REV. CANON DORRITY, B.D.

THIS series of addresses was conceived and undertaken in the interests of Christian reunion, and it has been welcomed as a happy afterthought that I should conclude them—an Anglican, the originator of the idea, and the rector of the church in which they have been delivered—with an address upon the last clause of the Creed which embodies “our common faith”: “I believe in the life everlasting.”

To-day is the Feast of the Epiphany, commemorating not only the manifestation of our Lord to the Gentiles, but the wistful and pathetic following of the star by the “wise men.” I would like to close these preliminary remarks by saying that a few of us, Nonconformists and Churchmen alike, have seen the star of reunion

shining in the East—nay, in the West—and that we have seen and do follow it with great joy. Please God it will one day lead us to a joyful reunion about the feet of our common Lord and Saviour, the Author and Finisher of “our common faith.”

I am to speak to you to-day on the concluding clause of the Creed: “I believe in the life everlasting.” The corresponding clause to it in the Nicene Creed, you will remember, is, “I look for the life of the world to come.” I would first point out that the phrase “the life everlasting” should be “the life eternal.” Bishop Harold Browne says that the Creed was originally written in Greek, and, if so, then the clause runs, literally translated, “the life eternal” and not “the life everlasting.” It is an adjective (Aionios) of which we have an English rendering in the word “Æonian.” Tennyson speaks of the “Æonian Hills,” and it is an adjective which is used many times

in the Scriptures of things which have long since come to an end—e.g. Gehazi's leprosy and David's throne. It is a word of which a great deal was written in that famous book by Canon Farrar, *Eternal Hope*. And I want to say that that Greek word as used here does not appear to me necessarily to mean "everlasting." For want of a better expression we may say that it contains the idea of quality rather than of duration; kind of life, not quantity. The Church Catholic, and of course the Anglican branch, wishes to convey by this clause what it means in the original, and not simply what a faulty English translation would make it appear to be. It is a translation of the Middle Ages, when some English scholars do not appear to have realised clearly that "eternal" and "everlasting" do not mean the same thing, and ought not to have been used as if exactly equivalent for the one Greek word. Thus let me say at the outset that the true and exact form

of this clause should be, "I believe in the life eternal." It is more worthy of note when we call to mind the fact that the phrase "life everlasting" or "everlasting life" is not to be found in the New Testament. That is a striking fact. The phrase is used about fifteen times, I think, in the Authorised Version of the Bible, fourteen of these being in the New Testament. I have examined all these fourteen passages in the Revised Version, and I find that in each place it has been replaced by the phrase "eternal life" or "life eternal," and we may be perfectly sure that this is a more perfect translation, and would not have been used if, in the opinion of the revisers, the word "everlasting" were as good as the word "eternal." Once more, then, we must think of this clause in days to come as "I believe in the life eternal." I want to observe that this, however, is not to say that the life-eternal will not be everlasting; on the contrary, we believe from many passages of Holy Writ that it

will. I am speaking for the moment of what the word "Aionios" necessarily means. Dr. Littledale, in a famous essay on the subject of "Eternal Hope," points out that there are three or four Greek phrases which mean "everlasting" which could have been used by those who drew up the Creed if they had meant to convey the sense of everlasting. So "eternal" and "everlasting" are not two words exactly equivalent, but expressions of different ideas. And as if the compilers of the Prayer Book had an inkling of the fact, we find them both used in the service for the burial of the dead. We have the two words "eternal" and "everlasting" used together in one prayer. ("May have our perfect consummation and bliss in thy eternal and everlasting glory"), as if the compilers clearly saw that there was a difference between the two words. We believe, and our Church in line with the Church Catholic wishes us to express our belief, in the life "eternal."

Mere everlastingness is not anything for which we need to pray or express belief in. Mere everlastingness may be conceived of as dull monotony of existence. It is not conceivable that our Lord should have meant us to believe in mere length of existence apart from the kind of existence. What the human spirit pants for is fullness of life, intensity, satisfaction. Happiness also, if it may be, and doubtless will be; though happiness is not the highest thing to pray for. Holiness is higher, and holiness will result in and be truest happiness. Still, it is conceivable that they should not run up into one. What the human spirit desires is not mere length of existence, but intensity and fullness. In short, it pants for the life of the world to come, as stated in the corresponding clause of the Nicene Creed. In other words, what we long for in our best moments is "eternal life," that is, the life peculiar to and characteristic of the coming age, the world to

come. A modern divine, writing on this clause, states that the difference between the life of the age to come and this present age is not in its endlessness, but in its intensity and complete reality. To think of eternity in that way is quite different from a monotonous sequence of time ; *eternity is intensity*. Eternity consists in being, not in length of time, for eternity puts us into the region beyond time, out of time, into the region where things *are*, and do not merely seem to be. Scott seems to have had something of the idea in the words :

“ Sound the clarion, fill the fife,
To all the sensual world proclaim,
One crowded hour of glorious life
Is worth an age without a name.”

Philip James Bailey has the very idea in his remarkable poem, “ Festus ” :

“ We live in deeds, not years ; in thoughts, not

breaths ; in feelings, not in figures on a dial. We should count time by heart-throbs. He most lives who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best."

We need not, then, lay much stress on the idea of duration. The thing to look for and long for is intensity and feeling, the life peculiar to, and characteristic of, the coming age, the life of the world to come. In "The Two Voices" Tennyson sings :

" 'Tis Life whereof our nerves are scant ;
Oh ! Life, not death, for which we pant ;
More Life, and fuller, that we want."

The heathen before the time of our Lord had a very pessimistic view of death and the beyond ; of death and its results. Here, for example, are some inscriptions from Roman tombs :

" Reader, enjoy thy life, for after death there is no life . . . nor any kind of enjoyment. Mix the goblet

of wine and drink. . . .” “Traveller, stay, listen and learn. . . . Once dead, we are all alike.”

More plaintive, yet scarcely more hopeful, is the far-famed epitaph written two hundred years before Christ :

“ Ah me, the herbs that in the garden faint and droop once more will bloom when Spring fresh life affords, but we, creation’s high and mighty Lords, sleep on, a long, a last, an unawakening sleep.”

And to all such the Christian faith came saying, “Death does not end all; there is a life after death, a life eternal and everlasting, for which this life is but a schooling time. We believe in the “life eternal.” We believe in it as a fact; we love it as a truth; we are trying to live in such a manner day by day as to be deemed worthy of it by our Lord.

And I would remark—and this not merely as pulpit rhetoric—that life eternal is something which need not wait until after death, but it is meant to be, and

can begin here and now, even upon the earth. For the life eternal is the life of God, in which we shall see Him as He is. We have got a very much mistaken habit of thinking of it as being something to come after death and after judgment. There is, however, a present aspect, and we may have a present foretaste of it, for Jesus said, "This is life eternal, that they should know Thee, the only true God, and Him whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." And one of our morning Collects, based upon this passage, conveys the meaning that in knowing Him our eternal life consists. Whom to know is to live. *Quem nosse vivere.*

So that again we see that eternal life is a matter of degree according to our knowledge of God, some living more of the eternal life than others, while all bears ultimately upon the human will and intention, and is settled by it. The bud is here; the blossom and fruit there. The seed is here, the full-grown tree there.

But the seed must be sown here. Eternal life must begin here and now, and there and then we shall know Him as perfectly as is possible to beings of our capacities ; and we are to know Him even as we also are known. Now we know in part, now we see through a glass darkly, by broken lights and shadows ; but then face to face, with unclouded vision, and, knowing, shall be changed into His image, even from glory unto glory.

And thus we can sum up the meaning of this clause for us as Christians. I believe that for the true and faithful follower of Christ there will be an everlasting life after death, and that a life of a particular and unique kind or quality, viz., eternal ; the life that is proper to and characteristic of the world or age to come ; life abundant, of such fullness, intensity and reality, of such satisfaction, fellowship, and sinlessness, as has not entered into the heart of man to conceive. Now we merely see the first faint streaks of the opal dawn

which flush in the Eastern sky, but by and by, through the mercy of God, we shall stand in the full blaze and radiance of the midday sun. And so and thus I believe in the life eternal, the life of the world to come.

*Appreciations Reprinted from the Church
Family Newspaper*

I—BY THE REV. G. SHILLITO

CANON DORRITY asks me to put into writing the impressions of the Nonconformist preachers who had the honour of occupying his pulpit last Advent. I should like to put on record, firstly, the enrichment of our own personal experience which came through our contact with Canon Dorrity and his Church. His large-hearted charity, his unfeigned friendliness, his careful loyalty to his own Church, combined with a genuine regard for the convictions of men of other Churches, his outspoken frankness and his happy courtesy to us all, made our fellowship in these services so good a thing that always we shall remember it with gratitude.

The addresses themselves were surely of some significance in the present eccle-

siastical position. It is not for me to criticise or appreciate their quality, but I may be permitted to point out that the Rector, listening carefully and critically to each one of them, declared at the close that not a word had been said which might not have been said by any loyal representative of his own Church. This congruity was not prepared, but spontaneous. We were told, even besought, to speak frankly the things we believed. Not one of us saw the notes of the others' addresses before they were delivered. Yet Congregationalist, Baptist, Presbyterian, and Methodist, speaking as well as they were able the things of their faith, discovered no cleavage and challenged no belief held by the people of the Church in which we preached. The things we spoke about were the supreme things; there are lesser matters in which difference might have developed, but it was a thing well worth doing to have our "common faith" proclaimed with genuine unity from the

historic pulpit of St. Ann's, by men of different Churches serving the one Lord. And, if I may be allowed to do so without presumption, I might add that Canon Dorrity's own contribution would be accepted as a true word by the Churches we represented. Canon Dorrity's action—criticised as it has been and was sure to be—has perhaps achieved this—a manifestation in his Church, that interchange of spiritual help amongst the Churches does not mean proselytising nor theological propaganda, not even affirmation of heresy. To have done this, not in a remote corner, but openly and in full daylight, and in a great church, marks a decided advance towards Christian unity in Lancashire.

The impression made by the services on our Nonconformist people has been excellent. They have accepted Canon Dorrity's invitation to us as a fine gesture of goodwill to our Churches in general. I have had letters from Australia, the States, and from Switzerland rejoicing in this new

aspect of Church fellowship. Many of our officials attended the services as they had opportunity, and they carried friendly reports to the towns and villages of our Lancashire world. Many who could not attend inquired diligently about the success of the experiment. Men of good-will, both in Anglicanism and Nonconformity, have been heartened, and others striving after similar manifestations of essential unity will have an example to which they can appeal.

Even the man-in-the-street has been impressed. He did not, indeed, come inside the church—that would, perhaps, be expecting too much—but he has been heard to remark that this is the right sort of thing, and that if it continues he might even himself be found in church some Sunday not yet definitely fixed.

Nonconformists, on the whole I think, are agreed that interchange of ministry between us and Anglicanism is an absolutely necessary preliminary to reunion.

Mr. Lloyd George's praise of face-to-face conference as a mode of settling differences has its application here also. Books, pamphlets, secret discussions between trusted delegates, public discussions in the press, leave the great mass of people on both sides quite cold and untouched. We must see each other face to face and hear for ourselves. The appearance of Canon Dorrity in a Nonconformist pulpit will dissipate the wary suspicions of, perhaps, five hundred hearers. Plainly this movement cannot be hurried, and, at the best, exchange of pulpits can only be occasional, for neither Anglican nor Nonconformist can afford to be out of his own pulpit too frequently; but, as the movement persists and intensifies, the temperature of the Churches will rise, and warm-hearted Churches, loving each other because at last they understand each other, will solve the problems that are insoluble in cold and isolated separation.

II—By CANON DORRITY

Canon Dorrity sends us the following :

On looking back, and looking over, I was inclined at first to be somewhat disappointed at the way in which this experiment was received, both by the Churchmen and Nonconformists of Manchester and the neighbourhood, ministers and laity alike, for the church was only comfortably filled for the first three addresses, and little more than half full for the remaining two. But there is little doubt that this was largely accounted for by the extremely unfavourable weather we enjoyed, and by the close proximity of Christmas and the New Year. I think that our Nonconformist brethren predominated in numbers, and I was exceedingly impressed by the fact that each day men were at least as three to two women, and they very generally past fifty years of age.

The preachers—bowed into the pulpit by myself—delivered their sermons in gown and hood, and the service consisted merely of an opening hymn and one or two Collects, and after the sermon there was a hymn and a collection, which was given to the Royal Infirmary. There was not one word or idea uttered by any one of the five preachers which could not have been uttered by the most enthusiastic Anglican or Strict “Catholic,” and the whole five sermons must have convinced any Anglican who needed to be convinced that there is far more in which Anglicanism and Nonconformity agree than in which they differ.

But far more important than any mere question of attendances at the services is the fact that they were held, and with the Bishop’s entire approval, for I think that it marks an epoch, and in a humble way may be held to be “making history.”

Twenty years ago I could hardly have envisaged myself as conceiving such an

idea or issuing such an invitation; but I have come to see that "the greatest thing in the world is love, brotherly love," and that it covers, and will cover, a multitude of sins and mistakes.

It may be thought by some that the fact that not a word was said by any of the preachers to which an Anglican could object merely intimated a superficial unity, and that the preachers studiously avoided controversial matter. It is worth while to say a few words about this. Controversial matter was not "studiously" avoided. The preachers took the clauses of the Apostles' Creed in natural order, and apparently found nothing which they thought it necessary to say in opposition to the common Anglican interpretations of them. As we all know, the matters which chiefly divide us from Nonconformists are the questions of the Ministry and the Sacraments, and these did not come naturally into their purview, because they are not mentioned, except inclu-

sively, in the Creed, and that only in one clause, viz., "The Holy Catholic Church."

My impression is that our Anglican folk in general held aloof. I do not think that for the most part they were positively hostile, but I should be afraid to say that they were positively enthusiastic. Still, there were a few, a faithful few, my own church officers among them. There are always "the faithful few," which is the doctrine of "the remnant" !

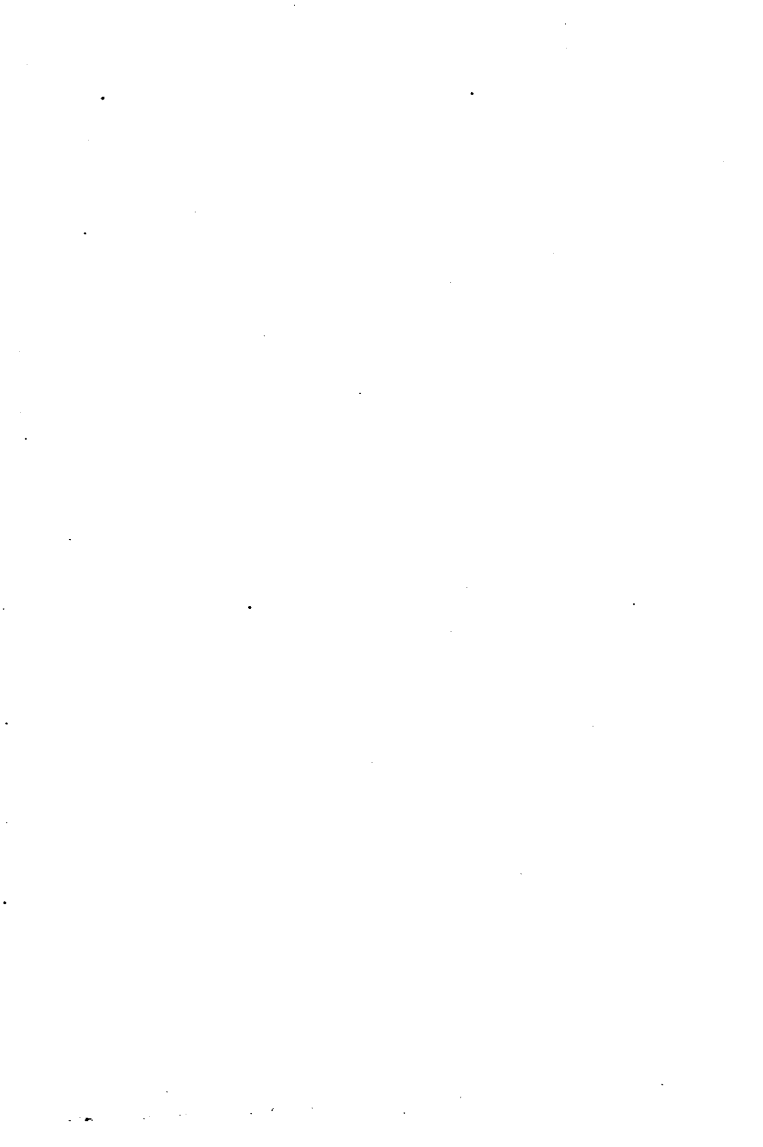
Whether a similar series shall become a feature at St. Ann's remains to be seen, but it is clear to me that I cannot always hope to find in this neighbourhood five or six Nonconformist brethren of equal eminence, ability and interdenominational good-will ; but a good start has been made, and "well begun is half done." The brethren concerned have presented me with a couple of books, suitably inscribed, as an abiding memorial of the occasion, and the local branch of the Life and Liberty Movement has passed a unanimous reso-

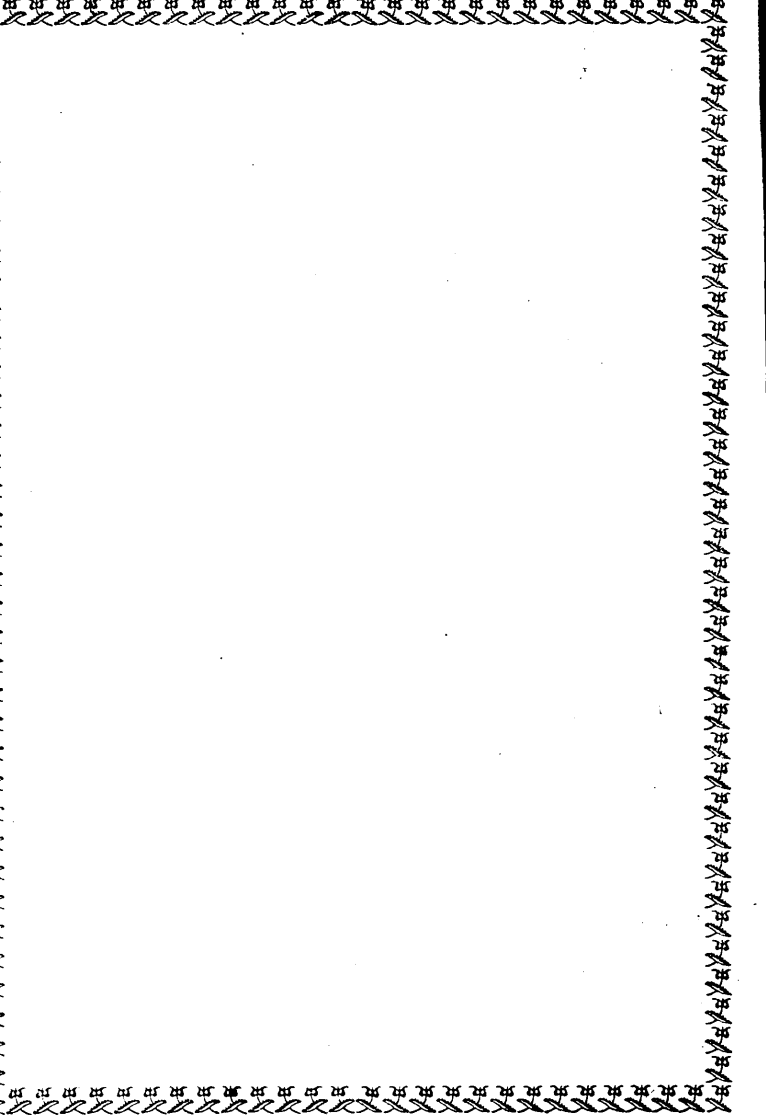
lution recording its appreciation of my invitation "as being a practical step of good-will which will, it is sure, forward the cause of Christian reunion.

Bishop Welldon sent me a most kind letter of encouragement and congratulation, which I greatly appreciated. "St. Ann's," he says, "was always the scene of experiments; you led the way when I was in Manchester, and I followed at a respectful and respectable distance. But I feel sure the time has come when the bar against inter-communion between the Church of England with non-episcopalian Churches in public worship must be broken down."

One outcome is the fact that I have accepted Mr. Shillito's invitation to preach in his chapel on the last Sunday evening in February on the occasion of their annual sermons and collections for foreign missions. That is surely a subject upon which we may unite, and which at the same time may well point the moral

of our "unhappy divisions." Upon the whole, I am thoroughly pleased and satisfied with the experiment, and, as the old waiter says in *You Never Can Tell*, "I'd do it again!" But prejudice on both sides is a "die-hard," and there is still need of a great deal of spade-work in the cause of Christian reunion.





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